

FARM LABOR NEWS

Vol. 3, No. 3

March, 1948

36¢ Per Year

Florida Gold Co. Recognizes Union

On February 23, a voluntary election was held among fruit pickers and grove workers employed by the Florida Gold Company near Lake Alfred, Florida. A representative of the company and a representative of Local 201 of the National Farm Labor Union conducted the election. The vote was 300 for the Union, against the Union—none.

Following the election to determine union representation, negotiations were started to work out terms of a Union contract. The Florida Gold Co. is one of the largest packing houses in Florida and has plants in other citrus producing states. The packing house workers are also in the A.F. of L. and are covered by union contract. Now, Florida Gold products in Florida are union all the way. The Farm Labor News recommends that readers purchasing fruit juice look for the Florida Gold label before they buy.

Farms Bigger; Fewer Tenants

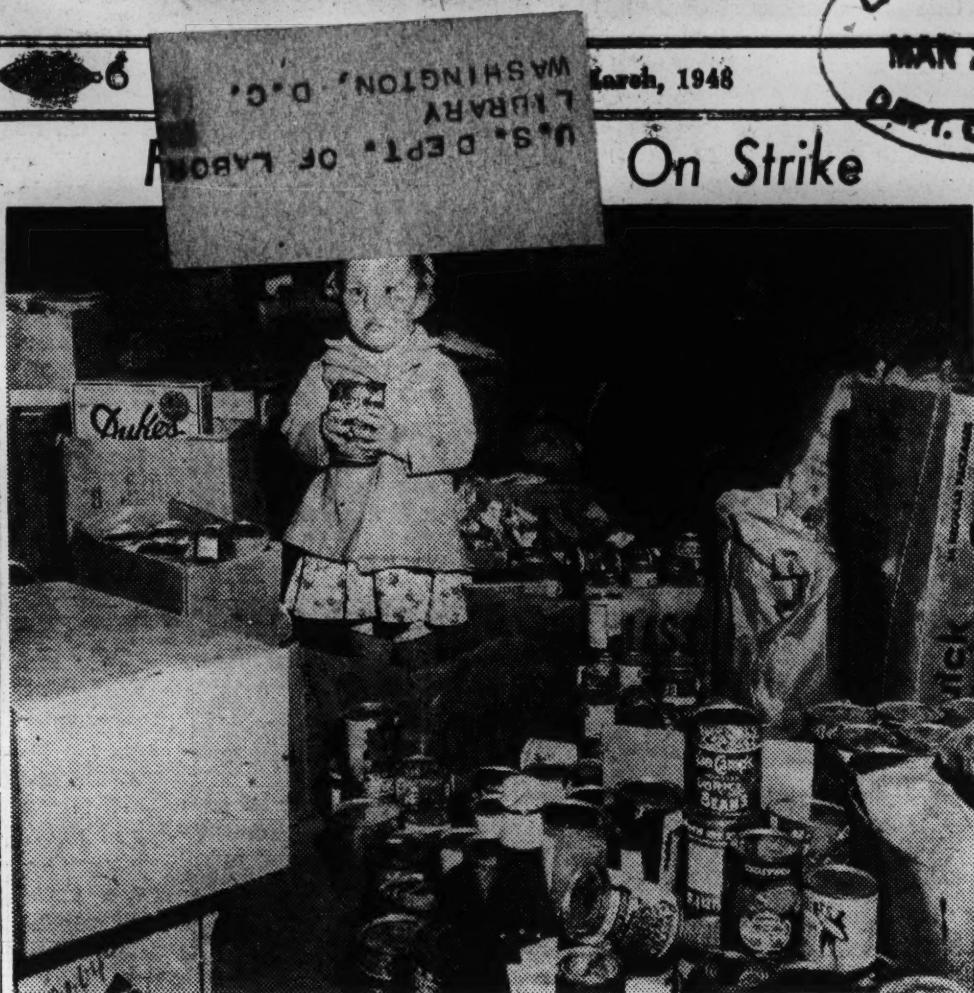
The average size of farms in the United States is 195 acres, says the Department of Agriculture. There are one million fewer farms than in 1935. Farms in the western states average 639 acres. In the North, they average 180 acres, while in the South, the average farm has 131 acres today. Arizona led the nation in the size of its farms. In 1910, Arizona farms were on an average, less than 150 acres, today they are over 3,000 acres.

Where the family size farm has gone—the Department of Agriculture does not say. We expect it is as dead as the dodo bird in these United States. If the figures really told the truth and the Department did not count little places of 3 to 10 acres as farms, the average size would be higher by far. Some other figures show over 40 per cent of the nation's farms consisting of holdings of over 5,000 acres, and 460 huge farms of 100,000 acres each.

Local News

McGehee, Ark. A new creamery route from McGehee, Ark., passes through the Wolf Project section where about 50 Union members are buying their homes from the Federal Government. The Union members say they make a lot of money from their milk and that helps during the winter months. Union members are talking about setting up their own co-operative store out on the Wolf Project. (By George Stith.)

Star City, Ark. County Sheriff Coggs summoned 3 Negroes who are taxpayers, for service on the County Grand Jury for the second Monday in February. Dave Burton, who is Vice President of Local No. 90, was among those serving on the Grand Jury in Lincoln County. The sheriff is reported to have said, "We are going to prove that we recognize any taxpayer in this county." Lots of Union members vote in Lincoln County. (By George Stith.)



The strike of 1,100 farm workers on the huge Di Giorgio Ranch near Bakersfield, Kern County, California, is now entering its sixth month. A.F. of L. unions throughout the United States have helped care for the workers and their families during the long strike. On February 6th a food caravan was organized by California unions. Hundreds of cars and trucks loaded with food and clothing, gifts for the striking members of the National Farm Labor Union, rolled into Kern County. Over 100 tons of food for the striking workers was contributed by members of A.F. of L. unions in southern California on February 6th. This was followed by a similar caravan on March 20, also bearing gifts of food from Union members in the northern section of California. More pictures of the caravan appear on pages 3 and 4. Shown above is little Louise Black, 3-year-old daughter of one of the Di Giorgio strikers.

In Appreciation

On behalf of the members of the National Farm Labor Union who are on strike against the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation Farms in Kern County, California, we express the appreciation of our entire membership for the splendid support given during this strike by the American Federation of Labor affiliates. We are grateful to the many International Unions, the State Federations of Labor, the Central Labor Unions, the Local Unions and the individual members who have contributed to the strike fund during the past six months.

Approximately \$100,000 has been spent to date for food, clothing, rent and other expenses incurred in this longest strike of agricultural workers on record. As of March 1, \$5,703.58 has been raised directly by the National Office of the National Farm Labor Union and transmitted to the Strike and Relief Fund, administered by the Kern County Central Labor Union in Bakersfield. Space in this journal does not permit us to list each contribution, however, full accounting of all funds contributed in the past six months and all funds that may be given in the future will be fully accounted for in audited reports and sent to all organizations concerned.

We take this method of thanking the labor movement for its magnificent support of this strike of farm workers.

For the National Executive Board:

H. L. Mitchell, President

F. R. Betton, Vice President

Dorothy Dowe, Secretary-Treasurer

Aged Member Gets Free Book

Simon and Sylvia Tallie of Cotton Plant, Ark., have been members of the Union for over 10 years. Both Simon and Sylvia are past 70 years of age. Simon is blind. A few years ago, the Union helped them both to get a pension. It does not amount to much but each year the Tallies have paid their dues. This year when the money came into the National Office, President Mitchell returned it with a lifetime membership book in the Union. The following letter was received a few days later:

Kind Brother:

I received your letter with the money and union books. Many thanks for what you have did for me. I hope God will bless you and all the rest so you can do more for humanity.

Yours in Christ,
Simon Tallie.

The National Office recommends that all Union Locals and Chapters give free membership books to the old-time members who are no longer able to work.

On Strike

Sugar Cane Workers Organize In Florida

The field workers employed by the United State Sugar Corporation at Clewiston, Florida, have joined the National Farm Labor Union, A.F. of L. Sugar Cane Field Workers Union Local No. 222 has been set up with 46 charter members. Organizer Phil Wells of the American Federation of Labor at Clewiston assisted the workers in forming their local union.

A campaign to enlist the 3,000 workers employed in the cane fields by the big U. S. Sugar Corporation is now underway. For several years, workers in the sugar cane refinery have been members of the American Federation of Labor. They have long enjoyed the benefits of organization, bargained with and entered into contracts with the U. S. Sugar Corporation. Now the field workers, supported by the unionized refinery men are organizing.

An appeal to all agricultural workers has been issued by the National Farm Labor Union Local No. 222 at Clewiston which says, "If you are a cane cutter, bean picker cabbage cutter, packing house worker, dairy farm worker, shed worker, tractor driver or truck driver working on the farm, you may join the National Farm Labor Union." All workers, without regard to sex, race, creed, color or nationality are eligible for membership in the National Farm Labor Union. The organizing leaflet also says, "No longer can industry use the phrase, 'Agricultural Workers,' like a flaming sword to drive these hard working 'Toilers of the Soil' back into Economic Slavery; no longer are you to be subjected to the treatment of peonage just because you live in the Company's house or trade at the Company Commissary or maybe the Company has loaned you a small sum of money which, if you knew the actual truth, the money you borrowed along with a lot more, belonged to you in the first place, had you been paid just wages."

Weather Hinders Union Work

Snow storms, sleet, ice, rain and floods have seriously interfered with Union activity in the mid-southern states during both January and February. Impassable roads have made it almost impossible for members to attend meetings and for organizers to visit the Union Locals. However, National Representative George Stith reports renewed interest and good meetings in the towns of Lake Village, Pine Bluff, Gould and Edmondson, in spite of the unusually bad weather.

Ala. Member Dies

This is to notify you that one of our leading members departed from us on the 10th of February. She was Mrs. Eather Lacy, assistant secretary of Local 77 at Ethelsville, Alabama. Her death came as shock to our Local. She leaves six small children and a host of friends to mourn her death. Her death is our loss but heaven's gain. (By W. E. Jones, President, Local 77, Ethelsville, Ala.)

Education & Research Director For Union

Ernesto Galarza of Washington, D. C. has been employed by the National Farm Labor Union as its Director of Education and Research. Mr. Galarza will undertake a program for education and organization of farm workers with special emphasis on the protection of the legal rights of Mexican-American citizens.

Prior to coming with the National Farm Labor Union, Ernesto Galarza was for 10 years chief of the Labor Division of the Pan-American Union, an organization maintained by the governments of North and South America.

Galarza was born in Mexico. When a small child he was brought by his parents to the United States as a migratory farm worker. He followed the crops up and down the state of California, living on the ditch banks and in the Mexican-Jim Crow settlements of the Southwestern states. He became a naturalized citizen and with the help of friends, secured an education. He graduated from Occidental College in Los Angeles with high honors.

Unlike many people, Ernesto Galarza never forgot the farm workers from whom he sprang. Throughout his career as an official of an international organization he sought to protect the rights of workers. He is well known among working people of South and Central America as well as being the most outstanding citizen of Mexican origin in the United States.

Ernesto Galarza will work out of the Washington headquarters of the National Farm Labor Union. The program which Mr. Galarza is to direct for the National Farm Labor Union was made possible by a joint contribution of the American Federation of Labor and the Robert Marshall Civil Liberties Trust of New York City.

Big Farmers Buy F. L. Homes

The sale of five farm labor housing projects in California and one in Arizona have been made, according to a report issued by W. A. Anglim, Department of Agriculture at Berkeley. Anglim is quoted as saying that these housing projects built by the government for workers were sold as follows: Beaumont Camp sold to the San Geronio Farm Association; Blythe Camp sold to the Blythe Growers, Inc.; The El Centro Camp sold to the Imperial Valley Farmers Association; The Reedley Camp sold to the Fresno Labor Procurement Association; Santa Maria Camp sold to the Santa Maria Grower Shippers, Vegetable Association; the Eloy Arizona Camp was sold to the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation.

There are eighteen more permanent farm labor projects in California. Governor Earl Warren is reported to have announced that he will ask the state legislature to buy them in March. However, it is feared that front organizations of the Associated Farmers, the Farm Bureau and other organizations representing large industrialized farmers and manufacturers will buy them before the state can act.

Which Model?

Asking a woman her age
Is like buying a second-hand car.
The speedometer has been set back
But durned if you know how far.

Local 201 Holds Election

Citrus Workers Local 201 with headquarters in Auburndale, Florida, held an election February 22 for officers during the coming year. L. S. Warnock was re-elected President; Karl Kimball of Davenport was chosen Vice President; and Joseph Reed of Lakeland was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Changes were made in the Local's By-Laws, providing for retaining one fourth of the dues payment by each Chapter.

What A Planter Says About Sharecropping

An article in the Staple Cotton Review for January by Oscar F. Bledsoe III of Greenwood, Miss., says that much mis-information has been spread about a sharecropper's earnings. Mr. Bledsoe writes as follows: "My plantation is ninety-eight years old, and this is my fiftieth crop. There are some grandchildren and great-grandchildren of my father's slaves included in this statement.

"The cotton crop this year is below the average yield, but the prices are above parity which will make a fair offset.

"The tenant's income per acre was \$101.70. His account (living expenses and doctor's bill) was \$57.45 per acre, which left a savings of \$44.25 per acre, or 43% of his earnings. Does the city white-collar worker save this much out of his earnings? Outside of his own crop, the tenant worked in plantation crops and earned approximately \$10.00 per tenant cotton acre.

"In 1849 my grandfather paid 25¢ per acre for this woodland. After the Civil War, my father paid from \$5.00 to \$10.00 per acre for partly-cleared land, and at the beginning of World War I, I paid \$40.00 per acre for nearly all cleared land. All land purchases were made during low-priced cotton, and bought for cash.

"This year the tenants cleared above all living expenses considerably more than the highest price I paid for the land. There are very few Negro landowners in the Delta, yet if their race were thrifty they would easily own the Delta. Based on the amount of money I have paid them above their living expenses during the last fifty years, they could have bought the plantation nearly five times based on the value of the land at the time of the earnings. This period covers cotton prices from 5¢ to 86¢ per pound. Nevertheless, the Negro is the happiest, most care-free, and has the best disposition of any race in the world."

Let's hear from a sharecropper who has been working 50 years. What does he have to say? Or is there one still living who has made 50 crops?

Workers Warned Against Reds

A leaflet is now being circulated warning fruit packers and others that Communist Party members organizing for the FTA-CIO are active again in Florida. Workers are advised to report to FBI and request an investigation of any FTA-CIO organizer appearing in their community. Reports are that Communist Party organizers have been seen in the town of Avon Park, Florence Villa, Arcadia, Orlando and Sebring.

Workers employed in the Dade City plant of the Pasco Company who are captives of the Communist dominated FTA-CIO are now circulating a petition requesting the U. S. Government to remove the CP-FTA union from their plant.

New Organizer Hired For Placement Of Members On Jobs

I. Lee Parker of Lasker, N. C., has been employed by the National Farm Labor Union to head its seasonal labor placement division. Mr. Parker has been engaged in this type of work for a number of years. He was employed as an official by the U. S. Employment Service in his native state and later became Labor Relations Officer for the Farm Security Administration. When FSA went out of business, Mr. Parker became Personnel Director for the United States Sugar Corporation, Clewiston, Florida. He resigned from that position about six months ago. Parker will assist President Mitchell in working out plans for placing members of the Union on seasonal jobs on farms and in food processing plants throughout the United States. During the coming season he will work out of the Memphis regional office, directing the recruiting and transportation of workers to the jobs. When most of the workers have been transported to jobs, he will go into the areas where they are at work and represent them in dealings with the employer and see to their return home at the end of the season.

We welcome this new organizer and feel sure that he will be of great service to the National Farm Labor Union.

U.S.E.S. To Handle Farm Jobs

The U. S. Employment Service and its 48 state employment services took over the job of recruiting labor for the nation's farms on January 1st. The Department of Agriculture's Extension Service was in charge of the wartime program of recruitment and placement of farm labor from 1943 to the end of 1947.

Prior to the war the recruitment of farm workers was handled by U.S.E.S. along with all other labor recruitment programs. The new program will use the 1,800 full time and 2,700 part time offices now in operation in every state. Officials of the U. S. Employment Service point out that 80 per cent of their local offices are located in or near agricultural areas.

Robert C. Goodwin, Director of U.S.E.S. says, "With the return of the farm labor program to the Employment Service, workers will find the local public employment services serving the entire labor market. The local office will be the central point in each community for workers to apply for all types of jobs, and for employers to obtain help in recruiting all workers."

The National Farm Labor Union is glad to see farm labor recruitment back in the hands of the federal and state employment service. We were opposed to it being removed from this agency in the beginning. From 1943 on, we saw how the Farm Bureau dominated county agents and mishandled the farm labor program. We realize that the Employment Service in many rural areas will continue to be dominated and run solely for the benefit of the industrialized farm interests of the country. However, in some states organized labor will have a voice in making the policies of their state employment service. In any case, farm labor will not be looked upon as a segregated segment of the working population, forced to take jobs at the lowest wages and under the worst conditions prevailing in the United States.

Pass
Your
Farm
Labor
News
On
To
Your
Neighbors
Let
Them
Know
What
The
Union
Is
Doing
For
Its
Members

FRIENDSHIP CARAVAN

The Caravan Assembles



Striking Di Giorgio workers, members of the National Farm Labor Union on strike, await the arrival of the huge A.F. of L. Caravan on the outskirts of the city of Bakersfield, California.

The Caravan Nears Ranch



Over 500 cars and trucks bearing food and clothing for the families of Union members on strike against the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation, approach the big farm. Cars loaded Union members from other A.F. of L. unions, with every trade and craft represented, paraded through the city of Bakersfield, then on out to the Di Giorgio Farm where they were met by thousands of farm workers assembled on the picket line.

Food Is Checked And Stored



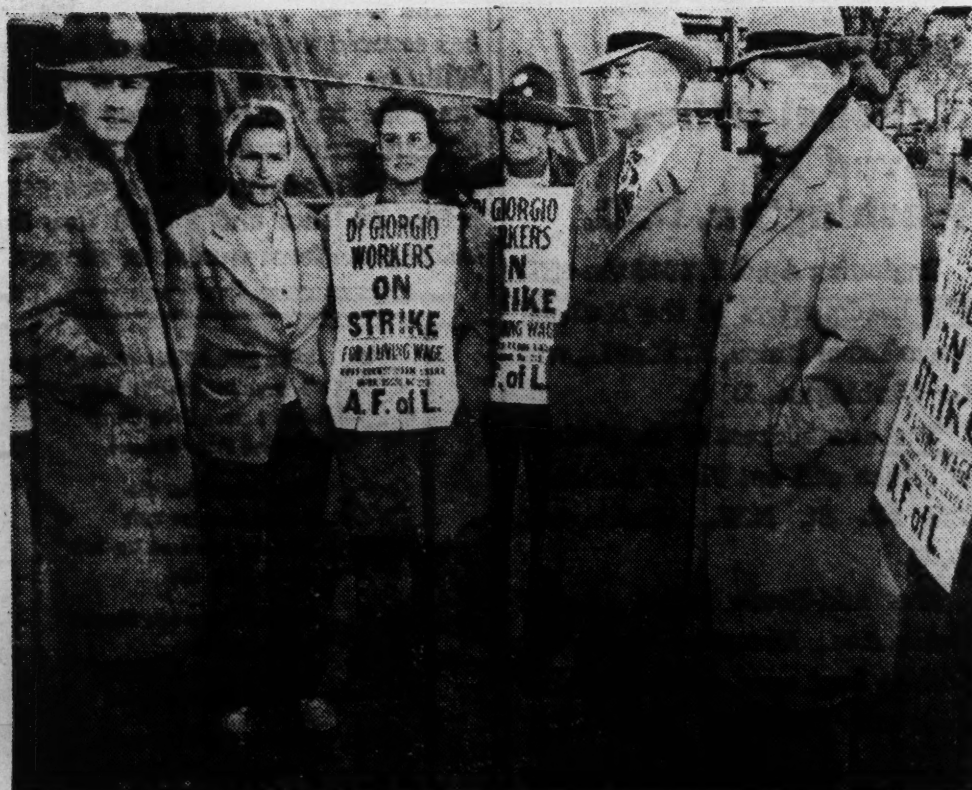
Reading from left to right—A committee composed of Dr. Ziegler, Musicians' Union of Los Angeles; James Anderson of the A.F. of L. Negro Labor Committee, Los Angeles; Hank Hasiwar, Western Representative of the National Farm Labor Union; and Irvin Cary, A.F.L. organizer from San Bernardino, check the food into storage at the Central Labor Council Hall.

Relief Checks From Unions



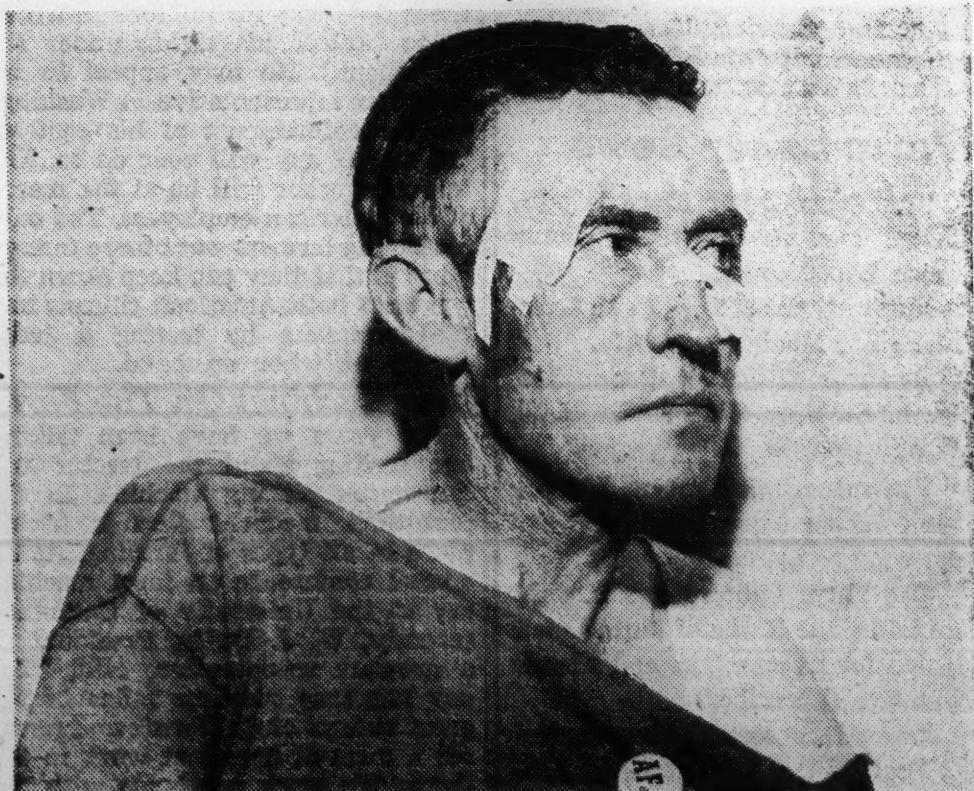
Secretary C. J. Haggerty of the California State Federation of Labor, presents a check for relief from other unions to James G. Price, President of the Kern County Farm-Labor Union Local 218.

On The Picket Line



W. J. Bassett, on left, Secretary of the Central Labor Union of Los Angeles, whose organization took the lead in arranging for the February 6th caravan, three pickets at the Di Giorgio headquarters; C. J. Haggerty, Secretary of the California Federation of Labor; and President H. L. Mitchell, pose for picture on the 19½ mile long picket line.

Victim Of Mob



Ray Copeland, a Di Giorgio worker, was among the five pickets set upon by imported company thugs on the morning of February 7th. Brother Copeland and other Union men, were knocked down, beaten, stamped upon. Officials of the Di Giorgio Corporation provoked the attack and took part in a mob that set upon the men early in the morning. Following the mob attack, over a thousand men and women massed on the picket line. Three of the thugs were arrested and no further attacks have been reported as the Farm Labor News goes to press.

Farm Labor Round Up

Farm Work Dangerous

A person's chances of being killed or injured while at work are much greater on the farm than in any other kind of a job, according to a report recently issued by the Iowa State College. The death rate for farm workers is 55 per cent per 100,000 while in industry the rate is only 31 per cent. In a nine year period the report states that 38,700 persons were killed while at work on the farms of the nation. There were 133,200 violent deaths on farms. 16,126,000 non-fatal accidents occurred on the farms during the same period of years.

No Workmen's Compensation For Farm Labor

No state makes it compulsory for farm workers to be insured. Only a handful of states provide any type of workmen's compensation for farm labor. However, every state except Mississippi has some system of workmen's compensation for industrial workers. Farm workers will not be covered by insurance until they are strongly organized in each state and get the laws amended to include themselves.

California Farm Workers Jobless

Unemployment and the need for relief is reported in the rich San Joaquin Valley of California. Welfare agencies state that there are 15,000 workers now destitute and that there is no provision for relief of their families. In April the potato harvest gets underway and it is expected that many of the workers will secure seasonal employment. About 500 workers are reported to have been transferred to the citrus belt in southern California. Potato growers are reported to be planning to pay only 4¢ a stub for picking up potatoes this year, whereas, last year they paid 6¢. The Kern County Farm Labor Union, over half of whose members are on strike against the Di Giorgio Ranch are organizing the Shafter potato fields. The Union is prepared to fight wage cuts for the potato harvest.

Plans To Beat Down Wages Underway

Throughout the United States, industrialized farm interests are pleased. The U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service has completed agreements with the British West In-

Evicted

Families of 12 members of the National Farm Labor Union were evicted from their homes on the Di Giorgio Ranch in Kern County, California, on January 16th. The man, his wife and little boy were taken in by other Union members who lived in a nearby town. Places were found by the Union for all of the evicted families.

Jobs For Members

Arrangements are now being made for placing members of the National Farm Labor Union on jobs in the eastern states.

The first shipment will be made the last of April. Two hundred women workers will be needed by the Edgar F. Hurff Co., of Swedesboro, N. J., during the asparagus season which will get underway about May 1st.

The Hurff Co., H. J. Heinz Co., of Salem, N. J., and P. J. Ritter Co. of Bridgeton, N. J., will need several hundred men and women during the tomato season which starts in July and August.

All members, men and women, who plan to go on these jobs during the spring and summer are advised to get their health cards and be ready for the shipping dates.

dies government and with the Republic of Mexico to allow big farm operators to import 100,000 foreign nationals under private contracts. Elaborate provisions have been made for the protection of the West Indians and the Mexican farm workers, however, the joker in the deck is that there is no way for the foreign worker to protect his rights under the agreement. He may appeal to his consul or representative in Washington for enforcement of his contract but few if any will ever do so. The foreign worker will be at the mercy of his American employers. The only reason big farmers want more foreign labor is that they can keep down the wages of both American citizens and the foreigners by having a large supply of labor on hand.

New Machines On The Farm

For years we have been talking and writing about the tractor and the cotton picking machine. In the meantime, mechanization is taking place in all types of farming. At an annual conference on farm machinery at the University of California recently, W. J. Duffy, President of a growers co-operative, said, "Today one may ride for miles in the great valleys of California and never see a team of horses at work in the fields. We work our lands with the heaviest of equipment. Tractors of 40, 70 and 80 horsepower are common on our farms. In rice growing sections, combines costing \$10,000 to \$15,000 are commonplace. Reports of the widespread use of new methods of pruning small fruits are also reported."

Indians Offered Jobs In California

Navajo Indians, who are reported to be starving on their reservations in the Southwest, have been offered jobs at farm work in Santa Clara County, California. According to a report from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the offer of farm work to a group of former owners of all the land in America will be investigated.

The Navajos, who were among the last of the Indian tribes to be conquered, were herded onto reservations in Arizona and New Mexico which consisted of worthless desert lands. They have increased in number until there is little chance of their making a living on that part of their lands allotted to them by the U. S. Government. Although they are the descendants of the first Americans and were born and reared here, they are not citizens of the United States, but rather wards of the Government. Only recently has the Government waked up to the fact that its wards were dying of starvation in the West. Congress has appropriated some money for their immediate relief and ways and means for the Navajos to earn a living are being considered.

NOTICE— National Office Moved To Washington, D. C.

Beginning April 1, 1948 the official headquarters of the National Farm Labor Union, A. F. of L., will be Washington, D. C.

The new address of the National Office will be: Victor Building, 726 9th St. N.W., Washington, D. C.

The mid-South office at 583 Beale Ave., Memphis, Tennessee, will be kept open on a part time basis after April 1st.

After April 1st, address all communications to the National Farm Labor Union, 726 - 9th St. Northwest, Washington, D. C.

Striking Printers Pass The Hat For Di Giorgio Strikers

One of the finest expressions of labor solidarity in the history of American trade unionism came from Chicago recently. Members of Local 16 of the Int'l. Typographical Union-AFL passed the hat on their picket line and collected \$351.25 for the 1,100 strikers at the Di Giorgio ranch near Bakersfield, Calif.

M. L. Mitchell, president of the National Farm Labor Union-AFL, received the check for the Di Giorgio strikers, and wrote George Bante, secretary-treasurer of the Chicago typos who are engaged in a gruelling battle with publishers and the NLRB:

"We note that the Chicago Typographical Union is nearly 100 years old, whereas the Kern County Farm Labor Union Local is less than one year old. Your members are spearheading the struggle to save the gains of 100 years of the best in American trade unionism, while our members on the 19 1/2 mile picket line in California are seeking to bring some of the benefits of unionism to the last large group of unorganized workers in America."

The California farm workers have been on strike since Oct. 1, 1947. Chicago's typographers walked out Nov. 24, 1947, after newspaper publishers made clear their intention of using the Taft-Hartley law to destroy union security and working standards.

Mary Nichols Dies

Mrs. Mary Nichols, wife of O. B. Nichols and the mother of Mrs. Carrie Dilworth, died at her home in Gould, Ark., on February 5th.

In addition to her husband and daughter, Mrs. Dilworth, she is survived by four other children, 17 grandchildren, seven great grandchildren and a host of friends to mourn her death.

S. C. Farm Operator Convicted Of Peonage

The U. S. Department of Justice has secured the conviction of John E. Wilhelm of near Florence, South Carolina, for holding James Dewitt, a Negro farm worker, in peonage for a year. Wilhelm received a one year prison sentence and a \$500 fine for holding the farm worker in slavery.

Farm Labor News

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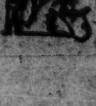
Who killed Price Control
I says Senator Wherry
And I ain't even sorry
I killed Price Control



Who saw him die
I says Senator Taft
And he left and he left
I saw him die



Who'll make his thread
I says MAM
I don't give a damn
I'll make his thread



Who is chief morrow
I says the Governor
And, Dad, that ain't
a rumour
I'm the chief morrow . . .

DEWITT POST, October 17, 1947